



The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

September 2009



CARING FOR EACH OTHER

As a congregation, we are tremendously blessed with many, many loving and caring people. I hear of visits, prayers, calls, cards and help offered to one another, just because you love one another as Christ has loved us. I give thanks to God for all of you and your wonderful witness!

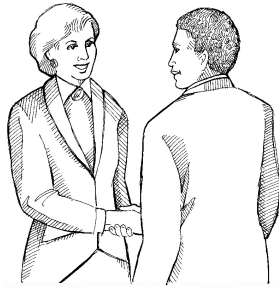
With you in mind, I recently read an invitation for members of the congregation to participate in an introduction to Stephen Ministry. Stephen Ministry is a proven way to train people in congregations like ours to be more comfortable and knowledgeable when offering care that is distinctively Christian to those experiencing tough times. As I thought of your giftedness and this opportunity—I thought there might be a good match!

I will be going to the workshop, which will be held October 3 in Roanoke, from 9:00-1:00, and I can take several persons with me. I will be glad to pay for anyone who would like to go. We will participate in three sessions on Oct. 3: Ministering to those experiencing grief; an introduction to Stephen Ministry; and how to care in a distinctively Christian way. You can go online at www.stephenministries.org to find out more.

Is God calling you to be involved in Christian care-giving? Please pray about your participation; this is an opportunity for you to grow in your ability to love others with Christ's love. Let me know that you would like to attend.

With Christian love and gratitude,
Pastor Stephanie

**CALLED
TO
SERVE**



As Christians each of us are called to serve God in ways that are unique to our own gifts. In the same way churches are often called to distinctive ministries based on their resources and the needs of the surrounding community.

I am looking forward to serving the Central UMC congregation in this exciting time of renewal and new beginnings for the church. In the coming months I hope to have the opportunity to visit with and get to know each member of our congregation. Please feel free to drop by my office for a visit whenever you are in the building. It will take some time for me to put names and faces together and I would ask for your patience as I get to know everybody.

In my short time here I have already discovered that Central has a lot going for it. We have a beautiful facility, a warm and welcoming congregation, a wonderfully diverse music program, and a great staff. In the coming months I hope to be able make my own contribution in helping to shape vital ministries in and through our congregation. I ask for your continuing prayers as I begin this journey with you.

Blessings,
Dan Purdom, Pastoral Assistant

OUR STEWARDSHIP

*Bring all the tithes
into the storehouse
that there may be food
in my house,
And try me now in this,
says the LORD of hosts,
If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
and pour out for you such blessing that
there will not be room enough to receive it.*



–Malachi 3:10

Do you feel an obligation to tithe? Many people give their tithes out of a sense of duty or as a debt owed to God rather than out of a true understanding of tithing: giving thanks for what they have been given.

God asks that we give our gifts where we are spiritually fed. Many of us receiving this newsletter have chosen Central United Methodist Church to be God's storehouse for our lives. As we begin this season of harvest and thanksgiving and prepare for next year's needs through our giving campaign (which begins September 27), please remember the church and be generous to God as He has been generous to us. Instead of trying to calculate how much money the church needs to sustain itself, let us try to think how we can reflect our gratitude in our gifts.

–Josh Gutshall
Stewardship Chairperson

The Central Connection is the monthly newsletter of Central United Methodist Church, Lewis and Beverly Streets, Staunton, VA.

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IN MINISTRY

The Mission of Central UMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Resident Bishop. Charlene Payne Kammerer
District Superintendent. Kathleen Overby Webster
Pastor..... Stephanie M. Sault
Lay Assistant to the Pastor..... Donna R. Huffer
Retired Missionary Professor..... Hunter P. Mabry
Professor MBC..... Kenneth A. Beals
Minister of Music/Organist..... Sherry von Oeyen

2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT, Part 2

By Esther Galima Mabry,
Central UMC Delegate to Annual Conference

In one of the evening sessions, Bishop Charlene Payne Kammerer gave a compelling sermon. In connection with the Conference theme, *Diverse People*, she asked hard questions such as:

- How are we to grow?
- How much will we expand the table of fellowship offered by Christ?
- What does radical hospitality mean?
- What if those who come are not like us?
- Do we really want people who are not like us?
- What if these people don't see things our way?
- What if these new people, young and old, see the world in different ways?
- How much will we expand the table of Jesus' fellowship and his radical hospitality?
- What kind of table will we set in our United Methodist congregation?

Then she added, "Jesus is in charge. It's not our choice who is invited." To me the questions are unnerving. I wonder how we might respond to them truthfully?

I was also electrified by the Call to Worship for the ordination service. It was led by the singing, not soft but full-throated passionate singing, of a Native American preacher of *Heleluyan*, a traditional Muskogee (Creek) Indian call

to worship. It was an appropriate introduction for the wonderful preaching by the Bishop. After the ordination the invitation was given to those in the audience to go forward if they so desired to offer their lives in service as well. Ordination services are very moving and remind me of my younger days when I was often altar bound, responding to the call to service. This time all I could do as the crowd got bigger was to silently say, "Alleluia, amen." God is great!

The Virginia Conference recorded an increase in members of 968 persons, although worship participation decreased by 932 from last year. However there were 65 churches that signed up for the "Five Talent Academy" to establish new

churches within the next 30 years. Five clergy persons were also appointed to plant new congregations.

There were two active bishops in attendance and a few retired bishops as well. Bishop Hee-Soo Jung of the Chicago area has been in theological education both while in South Korea and here in the USA. He preached twice and inspired all by his great preaching and sonorous baritone voice singing "There Is a Balm in Gilead. Bishop Joaquina Nhanala stayed for the duration of the Conference. She is the first woman Bishop elected in Africa and is the Resident Bishop of Mozambique Episcopal Area. The Virginia Conference is very much involved in the church in Mozambique. A number of volunteers from the Virginia Conference have visited the area on work projects

Outside the confines of the conference halls, many people worked under the sun:

- Collecting kits from the churches
- Bagging 35,000 pounds of sweet potatoes for area food pantries (volunteers included more than 100 youth)
- Receiving canned goods for the food bank
- Viewing of the water collected from the 18 districts as part of the "Baptismal Waters of the Chesapeake" exhibit celebrating God's creation and our care of the Chesapeake Bay

In the exhibit hall one could spend time getting educated by the different programs and resources on display. The Cokesbury bookstore had lots of discount books, including the Bishop's recommended books.

From the treasurer's report we find that the conference offering was \$223,596.28; and the kit offering had a value of \$83,592.46. We saw spontaneous giving by people to the retirement fund of Virginia Conference clergy and church workers amounting to \$14,409.00. The youth collected buckets of money to help fund special youth programs.

(Watch for the final installment of this report in the October newsletter.)



How are we to grow?
What if these new people,
young and old,
see the world in different ways?

MONEY, RELIGION, & CENTRAL



Money and religion are two things I generally have trouble including in the same conversation. Religion always seemed “better than that” to me, and money seemed to be a lowly necessity of life. However, no matter how great a goal God

has set for the human race, money is still essential to His purposes at this time. So when I was asked to write on the state of Central’s finances this summer, I tried to keep the latter thought in mind.

So now, the hard part, the “nitty gritty” as some would say, the stuff we all hate to have preached to us; but as members of Central we all need to know and pay close attention to. While Central is financially stable, thanks to many funds and endowments, in recent years we haven’t gained any ground on that. The monthly balance sheet for Current Expenses at Central has not been strong in recent years, and usually in the summer shows a substantial deficit. In the Fall, Winter, and Spring tithing and other gifts usually come close to (and sometimes exceed) our monthly bills and expenses. In the summertime, however, the picture is very different. Giving, for a variety of reasons, drops sharply; and the red ink appears on the balance sheet and usually stays until late in the Fall. These losses might seem like a trivial and minor setback for a few months of the year. But the truth is that the good months don’t always cover the bad months. Additionally, our scant surpluses often go towards paying a portion of our Conference Apportionments—ministry funds that further the greater works of the United Methodist Church as a whole.

That was the bad news. Now, the good news: This summer has been one of the better ones in the past few years. To start off with, the heating bill (for which we’ve been paying the monthly “budget” amount of \$1,320.00) was actually paid off before June. This one simple fact greatly improved the look of our monthly finances.

But we are asking that you please pray about your response to God’s generosity and consider whether

God is asking you to give a little extra “above and beyond” to help us finish out the summer. Thank you for your continued faithfulness in supporting the ministries and mission of Central.

Ben True
Member of the Finance Committee



Notes of Interest

CONGRATULATIONS to Vince Ennis’ grandson, Edward V. Ennis IV who received the Boy Scout of America’s highest honor, the Eagle Scout Award, on August. 16.

THE STAINED GLASS HOMESCHOOL CHOIR, will again meet for rehearsals in our Choir Room for the 2009-2010 school year. They are scheduled to meet on Tuesdays, 2:00-3:15, from September 15 to April 27.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE HAND BELL OR CHANCEL CHOIR? We would love to have a few more ringers and singers! Please see Sherry von Oeyen for more information.

BECOMING A LOVE AND LOGIC PARENT®, offering simple and effective techniques for dealing with children from preschool through the teens, will meet at Central for 7 Mondays, Sept. 21–Nov. 2, 6:00–8:00 p.m. The cost is \$25 per person; child care and meal are provided. Pre-registration is required—please contact the Office on Youth at 942-6757. The sessions will be held in our newly renovated classrooms on the 3rd floor of our Education Building.

SHOES FOR KENYA . . . Thanks for the great response! We’re still collecting shoes and will for several months to come. The shipping container is huge; and the area group sponsoring this drive hopes to fill the entire container! Our unused shoes—what a wonderful and simple way to help widows and orphans in Kenya!



FALL FESTIVAL: SATURDAY, SEPT. 26

Pancake Breakfast 8:30–12:00

Silent Auction 8:30–1:00

Bake Sale * * * Door Prizes!

We invite your contributions of Items for this special fund raiser. Some suggestions include:

- New / Like New
 - Household Items, small appliances
 - Decor–general & seasonal
 - Tools–home, auto, garden
 - Theme Baskets
 - Gift items, jewelry
- Craft Items – all kinds
 - Knit, Crochet, Sew
 - Art
 - Jewelry, beading
 - Woodworking
 - Other medium
 - Quilts
- Gift Certificates for Services, Meals
 - Restaurant, fast food, pizza, coffee
 - Oil change, car wash, auto parts store
 - Beauty salon, massage, facial, manicure
 - Pet grooming, boarding, sitting
 - Yard work, house work
 - Entertainment–concerts, sports events, Black Friars
 - Department Stores
 - Grocery Stores
 - Book Stores
 - Gift Shops

We're excited about the Fall Festival and hope it will be an annual event. Local business have been asked to participate, and they have responded positively. The planning team is busy putting final touches on the festivities. If you receive a telephone call asking for your assistance in some manner, we do hope that you will respond positively. And, more than anything else, we hope you will find the time to participate in the festival. Bring a neighbor or friend with you to share this experience.

Please take a little time to contribute to and participate in a major fund raiser which will enable Central UMC to continue and, hopefully, expand its ministries.

This new fund raising venture for Central is being sponsored by the Finance Committee. Please feel free to contact the Church Office with any questions. (We have sufficient storage space and can accept items as you make or "discover" them.)



SIGN UP NOW

Start dates to be announced soon. Please sign up now so sufficient materials may be ordered.

“EXPERIENCING GOD”

This is a daily experiential study that will help participants develop a God-centered way of life. The workbook covers 12 weeks and will help you come to know God intimately, to recognize His voice, and to understand His will for your life. Sign up in the gathering area; this class will be taught by Pastor Stephanie.

“PATHWAY TO RENEWAL”

This is a book that helps congregations pray and plan their way to renewal with practical steps. The Strategic Planning Committee will be going through this book together and invites other interested members of the congregation to join them. This book has six chapters, but discussion and response may take us longer than six weeks! Sign up in the gathering area; this class will be led by various members of the Strategic Planning Committee.

CHILD’S PLAY

Soon the quiet hall outside the church offices will be resounding with squeals of happiness, fun and silly songs, cries for Mom, and noises like trucks, cars, trains, bears, and buses.

These will be made by one or more of our twelve new children with their teachers doing what two-year olds do.

It is good to report that the three teachers will be returning: “Miss Cynthia” (Botkin), “Miss Gretta” (Cason) and “Miss JoAnn” (Black). We are looking forward to the loving children. Each year God and their parents entrust another group of wonderful youngsters eager to learn about life and the world beyond their home. Please pray for us as we seek to meet the challenges and fulfill the need of each child and his/her parents.

—Jo Ann Black
Director and Teacher of Child’s Play



AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER?

*United Methodist Women
invite you (men & women)*

TUESDAY, SEPT. 8, 7:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: FACTS FROM PALESTINE

It is history that makes Israel-Palestine, a little piece of land no greater in size than New Jersey, so significant. But the tension between these two peoples has been for years and, although Jerusalem has been a beacon of the spirit, it’s always been a center of strife and tension—and the strife and tension remain. The events in Israel-Palestine used more ink in our daily newspapers than any other event in any other place in the world. In August 2005 we witnessed Israeli pull from Gaza Strip to the anguish of Israeli families being uprooted in the dismantling of illegal Jewish settlements. Three years ago Israel-Palestine was our geographical study at the School of Christian Mission. Our guest speaker, Rev. Alex Awad, from Palestine, stated that the conflict between Israel and Palestine has been forever although they lived together side by side in relative harmony for hundred years. He noted that because of this conflict, the Palestinians became refugees and internally displaced within Israel and made up one of the world’s oldest refugee population. According to Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Zaher, a Palestinian playwright, the Palestinians were “unwilling to give up their attachment to history.” It is one wielded by both Palestinians and Israelis. Any understanding of what is happening there today demands that we listen for the voices that tell the story of how the past has shaped the present and will continue to shape the future.

For the September 8 UMW Unit Meeting (7:30 pm, Fellowship Hall), Caroline Jones has invited her friend, Ms. Becki Rae, who will share her experiences on a recent “Fact Finding Treatment Tour” of Palestine. We’re sure that Ms. Rae’s experiences will be of interest because, as Christians, “we ARE our brother’s keeper.” We would like to invite not only the women, but also the men, so that we will all have the opportunity to learn more about the plight of our brothers and neighbors as well. —Esther Mabry, Circle Leader





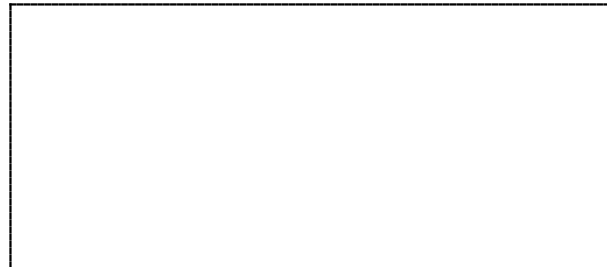
Central United Methodist Church

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September
2009

Return Service Requested



FALL FESTIVAL - Sat., Sept. 26
Pancake Breakfast 8:30-12:00
Silent Auction 8:30-1:00

Bake Sale - Door Prizes - Crafts

All are Invited!
(See details inside)

